



STATE OF VERMONT
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Statewide Science Assessment Results Released

MONTPELIER – Statewide science assessment results for Spring 2009 were released by the Vermont Department of Education today. The results are from the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) science exams, given to Vermont public school students for the second time in grades 4, 8 and 11 in May 2009.

Fifty-two percent of Vermont fourth graders tested were proficient or higher in science, up four points from last year. In grade eight, 25 percent were proficient or higher, down one point. In grade 11, 27 percent were proficient or higher, up 2 points.

“There is an obvious need for improvement in how our students are learning science,” said Commissioner Armando Vilaseca. “The wide range of results by individual school, from zero percent to 96 percent proficient, shows me that students are capable of achieving the standard, but they are not all receiving the standards-based science curriculum that we expect due to the varied delivery of curriculum in our school districts.”

As seen in previous years statewide and nationally, an achievement gap persists between students from low-income families and their peers. In grade four, only 33 percent of those students were proficient or higher, compared to 61 percent of their peers. In grade eight, only 10 percent of those students were proficient or higher, compared to 30 percent of their peers. In grade 11, only 13 percent of those students were proficient or higher, compared to 30 percent of their peers.

“These results represent an early snapshot of science understanding by Vermont students, and indicate that alignment of instruction with science grade expectations in elementary classrooms is beginning to make a difference,” said Science Assessment Coordinator Gail Hall. “However, all school programs need to continue to give standards-based science content greater emphasis within classrooms, as well as problem solving, critical thinking, and reading and writing skills in science.”

The NECAP exams were created in collaboration with Rhode Island and New Hampshire. These exams are designed to specifically assess how well Vermont students have learned the skills and content contained in the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*. This is the second year of results on the NECAP science exams.

For school reports, visit

http://www.education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_assessment/data.html#necap.